

journalism of the period, it is as well that one should momentarily retrace one's steps.

Already in 1867, through M. Albert Lacroix, his publisher, Zola had become acquainted with M. Paul Meurice, an able novelist and playwright, best known, however, by his connection with Victor Hugo. The great man had a horror of proof-correcting, and even in his lifetime much of his writing was passed for the press and, one may add, revised by M. Meurice, to whom, since then, has fallen the task of editing both the poet's correspondence and the *editions definitives* of his books. In the last years of the third Napoleon's reign Hugo lived at Brussels, M. Meurice acting in many matters as his Parisian representative.<sup>1</sup> Madame Meurice's drawing-room was thrown open to all the *Hugolites* of the time; and Zola often attended her receptions, accompanied on some occasions by Duranty, on others by Manet. He then met several of the so-called Parnassian poets,<sup>2</sup> who, though their methods were often very different from those of the master, professed great admiration for him. Such were Sully Prudhomme and Prangois Coppe'e, both of whom Zola first met in Madame Meurice's drawing-room. With M. Coppe'e, his relations became and remained intimate until the great Dreyfus case, when the so-called "poet of

the humble," suffering from a serious chronic disorder, and fearful of losing the services of an expert medical attendant devoted to the priestly cause, resolved to save both soul and body by joining the great crusade against the Jews.

<sup>1</sup> B"otably with regard to the publication of that extraordinary romance, "L'Homme qui Kit," for which Lacroix paid much more than its value.

<sup>2</sup> The Parnassians, who were brought together by Xavier de Kicard, dated from about 1860. The first series of "Le Parnasse contemporain " was issued by Lemerre in 1866.